

PROLOGUE

“To make a long story short, my friends, the multiverse is no longer under the control of the Collective—Pellamor, Carrado, and Belakane, the group of barren universes that had joined Rivalen and used a device that he had built to gain that control over the Creators. The brother and sister rivalry between Helsin and Godriel Elconn concluded in mutual annihilation during the forced propagation event in the Argante universe and are no longer a threat. The Alta and Earth analogs that were created by the Collective still exist. Alta-A, where Alani Elconn is imprisoned for war crimes, is now a peaceful planet thanks to the efforts of Lilikee Surka, the singer-song writer turned double-agent. Although Alta-A remains in the Argante universe, Earth-A is now in the Rivalen universe and for that, an uneasy truce exists amongst the Creators even with the formation of the Triad—Skorris, Illex, and Varna, those Creators elected to adjudicate fair and due process between Blue Star, Rivalen, Agravain, and Argante.

“Blue Star, an unexpected result from the Collective’s most recent project and one who was not entirely under the control of Rivalen’s device, had solved the problem of releasing the dimensional tethers from Rivalen to the other Creators with help from her daughter, Jewel. While Blue Star would have preferred punishment for Rivalen, it was necessary to make Rivalen into a living universe by transplanting the Earth-A solar system from Argante. Argante was furious, but on the plus side, in doing so, the planet was saved from nuclear holocaust. More importantly, Blue Star was able to avoid complete annihilation of the multiverse. Having another Creator by her side to quell the backlash of energy caused by the release of the tethers was necessary for that. Then, she had taken Jewel home to Makka. Jewel had suffered the brunt of Blue Star’s unconscious desire for evolution. On Rivalen’s orders, Jewel had been killed a thousand times by his son, Tristan, in order to slow Blue Star’s ability to circumvent his device and that is why Tristan was sentenced to a broken flesh and bone prison on Earth-A. After a brief respite with his father, Tristan is slated to be remanded to Agravain for the period of Rivalen’s self-fertilization. The punishment is more than justified.

“With Blue Star’s tutelage, Rivalen is in the process of attempting said self-fertilization. The Triad has allowed him four billion years to become a Creator and then return the Earth-A solar system to Argante.

“The Triad also negotiated recompense for Argante’s temporary loss of Earth-A and Blue Star relinquished one-half of the human population. The target population wasn’t specified, so Blue Star delivered the worst half of Earth-A’s populace to Argante. By doing this, Earth-A became as close to utopia as a civilization can be.

“Phearus is still a big question mark, however. In spite of a very rigorous search, there is no sign of the Altaen that had been programmed by Pellamor to assassinate Jewel after she was kidnapped by Belakane and transferred to Earth-A. Jewel had reported to Blue Star that Phearus was struck with a glancing blow of dark energy, not a direct hit, before disappearing into a dimensional rift. Dark energy is the most lethal weapon in the multiverse, so, there was a good chance that he was destroyed.

“Which leads to the question of the whereabouts of the rift and that search came up empty too.

“With Tristan scheduled to be released from his mortal confines in less than a minute, Rivalen is concerned about what he did not know and rightfully so.

“What he doesn’t know is a number of things. He does not know that the rift is indeed still on Earth-A, that it is well-camouflaged, and that it leads directly to Agravain because that is where Phearus was taken from. He is unaware that Lieutenant Raider of the Vanguard was caught up in

the transfer of the solar system and now stranded in his universe. It's also unknown to him that Phearus survived his encounter with the lethal dark energy-wielding Jewel and was destined to travel backward in time to meet Daniel when he was a boy, the serial killer that Phearus enlisted to help him trap Jewel and whose Earth-prime counterpart was Blue Star's first kill as an energetic being. Lastly, he does not know that an event in the future will bring Phearus and Raider together. Each from a different dimension and a different Alta, Phearus from Alta-prime in Agravain and Raider from Alta-A in Argante, their paths will cross on Earth-A in Rivalen's dimension—a dimension where no version of planet Alta exists—and they will come to work together in order to try to cross dimensions and go home, and that Tristan will ultimately be caught up, along with some other unfortunate souls, in the maelstrom created by their efforts.

“Indeed, they will all come to learn that time is a tricky mistress.

“Oh, who am I, you ask? Don't worry. We'll meet later in this story. Right now, we have to follow Phearus, back in time, for his encounter with Daniel. So, fasten your seatbelts, my friends, the rollercoaster ride begins in three, two, one—now.”